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PRIVILEGED INFORMATION  
SPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRED

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

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DATE: 4 March 1975

BC 21

SUBJECT: Meeting with Comisario Margaride, Chief of Argentine Federal Police

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Robert C. Hill  
Comisario Margaride  
Inspector Parra  
Minister-Counselor Joseph J. Montllor, DCM  
BG Norman J. Salisbury, COMUSMILGP  
Col Samuel Stapleton, DATT  
Mr. Robert W. Scherrer, LEGATT  
Mr. George S. Beckett, RSO  
Mr. Walter F. Boyle, Security Officer

PLACE: U. S. Embassy

DATE: 4 March 1975

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)  
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS  
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director  
Exemption(s):  
☒ Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny  
Declassify: ( ) In Part ☒ In Full  
( ) Classify as ( ) Extend as ( ) Downgrade to  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Reason \_\_\_\_\_

Subject meeting took place between 1130 - 1225 hours, 4 March 1975. After introductions were made, Comisario Margaride expressed his sincere condolences to the Ambassador on the assassination of Mr. Egan. After Margaride expressed his condolences, the Ambassador introduced him to other participants of the meeting and we sat down and began the discussion. Ambassador Hill thanked Margaride for the support he had given to the Embassy and in particular for the support given by Inspector Parra. Margaride stated that he was not surprised by the laudatory remarks about Parra because Parra was specifically selected for the job because of his intelligence, dedication and professionalism. Furthermore, that Parra had been commended for his work on previous assignments.

The next topic was a rather lengthy discussion on the difference between the ERP and the Montoneros -- the fact that the ERP ranks were filled with people with better backgrounds and extensive education while the Montoneros were almost made up of people with much more limited social status and that they were not nearly as well educated. He stated that the Montoneros derived their name from

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a terrorist group of long ago and, as their predecessors, they were extremely ruthless and cold-hearted in their handling of prisoners. This statement was made after Margaride had viewed some blown-up photographs of the body of Mr. Egan, which showed that he had been severely beaten and had what appeared to be rope burns on his ankles.

At this particular time the Ambassador stated that he would like to ask Margaride a question and would understand if Margaride did not wish to reply to the question. Margaride asked that the question be given and he would reply. Ambassador Hill stated that he frequently saw the Soviet Ambassador at social functions and that the Soviet Ambassador was always lampooning the security that he and the US Embassy personnel used and further stated that he did not need any security. Margaride's reply was that the Soviet Ambassador did not need security because he was "running the whole operation," i.e., that terrorist operations were Communist-inspired and undoubtedly received money and perhaps guidance from the Soviets. Margaride stated that they provided police support and security to friendly as well as unfriendly countries that were represented in Argentina and further implying that they were providing security not only to protect them but also to survey latter's operations because they were convinced that the Communist countries (USSR and Cuba) are contributing money to the terrorist operation here in Argentina.

The Ambassador asked Margaride if he knew whether the judge of the Buenos Aires Province Supreme Court had been released. Margaride said that he had no information on that at the present time. The Ambassador pointed out there might be concern because there was no Government support on providing an explanation to meet the Montoneros' demand in the Egan case but almost concurrently with that, Schneider was released in exchange for the judge. At this Margaride gave a long explanation of the reason. Under the State of Siege a judge has the constitutional authority to release a prisoner considered dangerous to the security of the state if that prisoner voluntarily departs for a foreign country. Margaride stated that neither the police nor the Executive Branch wanted Schneider released; that Schneider was a known criminal, a terrorist and had been accused of killing a policeman. However, under the existing law the judge could release him. In the case of Schneider there almost seems to be considerable intrigue in the Judicial Branch on this, subjecting it to special interest in that one of their own was kidnapped.

Margaride stated that there was considerable introduction of arms, coming into Argentina through Patagonia and bordering states to the north; that he believes these are highly difficult to control not only because of the terrain but by the fact that the areas are generally uninhabited. He further stated that he had heard that the weapons illegally being brought into Argentina might include ground-to-air missiles. (It is assumed that these are the "RED EYE" type. It should be further noted that Col Stapleton provided some information on this type of missile to Margaride's office on 27 February 1975. Because of this fact, maybe Margaride is escalating his belief beyond sound supportable intelligence).

  
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Regarding the Born brothers' kidnapping, Margaride stated that he had heard that a ransom of 15 million dollars' worth of arms was being negotiated. The arms would be stored in a non-involved country for later shipment into Argentina. He thought that the negotiation on the ransom and the purchase of arms was being done in either Paris or Rome (but these cities would not be the depositors of the weapons).

Margaride stated that everybody in the embassy who could should be armed because if there were an attempt made to kidnap one, it would be better to shoot it out and die killing some of the assailants rather than be killed from the ruthless hands of the abductors later after considerable torture.

Margaride stated that there is considerable money being spent in Argentina through foreign Communist representation/Embassy. Margaride stated that the Soviets and Cubans had deposits in a bank and had traced the withdrawals of this money to terrorist activities. Much of this money is used to buy the services of ordinary criminals to do bombings, murders and assassinations. He stated that for 250,000 M/N a common criminal could be bought to plant a bomb on a particular target. He did not specifically say how much the price was for an assassination but implied that it was not excessive. He stated that many of the assassinations and terrorist acts were conducted by these "mercenaries" whose services are purchased by the ERP and/or the Montoneros. Years ago the ERP and Montoneros were made up of people of a higher level of intelligence who were working solely for a political cause, but now they are recruiting hardcore criminals or people of middle class families who are drug dependent and need the money for their habit.

Margaride talked about the conference of terrorists in January 1974 that Santucho attended and stated that the gathering included terrorists from all Latin-American countries. He stated that in February 1974 there was a conference held of the police chiefs of the Latin American countries. The subject of the conference was how to combat terrorists. Brazil was the only country that did not have representation, their excuse being that it was held during Carnival. He noted recently that the Brazilian police had come to Argentina for information -- in other words, Margaride was stating that Brazil had a much bigger terrorist problem than is known. Margaride stated that he believed that in the Terrorists Latin-American Conference in 1974, Santucho was selected to carry on the role that previously was filled by Che Guevara prior to his demise. Also in that conference, it is Margaride's belief that an alliance was made by the Montoneros and the ERP and that, if successful in toppling the Argentine Government, Argentina would become the location for the 5th International.

The meeting terminated cordially. Prior to leaving, Margaride stated that he liked the United States; that his daughter lived in the United States and his grandchildren were U.S. Citizens.

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